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TABLE 1—MORTALITY FROM MALIGNANT NEOPLASMS AMONG MEN
United States—1978

Death Rate per 100,000

Area	Ages 35-74*	Ages 35-44	Ages 45-54	Ages 55-64	Ages 65-74
United States	321.9	45.0	192.0	521.5	1,102.9
New England	324.2	43.8	183.8	513.4	1,157.9
Maine	332.5	52.4	227.0	513.1	1,095.3
New Hampshire	318.3	34.6	187.5	508.7	1,136.5
Vermont	346.2	30.1	189.5	522.7	1,343.3
Massachusetts	326.3	40.8	175.9	523.9	1,185.4
Rhode Island	349.8	64.7	224.2	548.2	1,146.3
Connecticut	308.8	45.3	170.4	484.8	1,111.4
Middle Atlantic	328.4	43.6	195.8	525.9	1,142.1
New York	320.0	44.1	190.3	502.5	1,126.4
New Jersey	335.8	46.7	192.4	526.9	1,199.1
Pennsylvania	335.9	40.8	206.2	558.1	1,131.4
East North Central	326.4	45.1	196.6	522.5	1,126.0
Ohio	335.7	43.0	206.2	538.7	1,156.1
Indiana	333.4	46.8	198.9	548.9	1,127.2
Illinois	332.0	49.5	203.1	523.2	1,140.5
Michigan	324.8	42.9	190.0	516.5	1,145.1
Wisconsin	288.1	40.9	167.4	464.3	1,000.1
West North Central	290.5	38.9	167.8	463.7	1,025.1
Minnesota	270.9	31.8	150.1	423.2	999.4
Iowa	281.9	32.0	170.3	421.1	1,041.0
Missouri	326.8	48.6	182.4	544.6	1,116.6
North Dakota	247.6	46.1	149.8	358.6	880.8
South Dakota	246.7	32.5	167.9	398.8	802.1
Nebraska	288.9	29.4	179.3	484.0	978.3
Kansas	283.7	45.4	161.0	451.5	989.3
South Atlantic	346.9	50.1	214.5	580.9	1,134.7
Delaware	368.9	53.0	204.9	600.1	1,292.8
Maryland	361.9	46.8	205.1	566.1	1,310.4
District of Columbia	472.6	67.9	308.0	819.2	1,461.9
Virginia	339.9	40.2	200.2	550.2	1,192.5
West Virginia	347.3	69.6	194.8	546.2	1,186.7
North Carolina	335.9	42.5	204.9	553.5	1,137.2
South Carolina	342.5	55.9	211.9	570.4	1,106.2
Georgia	359.5	54.9	217.9	601.6	1,178.3
Florida	346.0	52.8	231.6	602.4	1,041.9
East South Central	351.1	55.4	222.9	588.2	1,120.1
Kentucky	347.4	51.1	221.5	575.3	1,128.1
Tennessee	344.6	55.9	218.8	590.9	1,072.5
Alabama	359.2	56.7	219.3	599.0	1,171.9
Mississippi	356.4	59.1	239.9	585.4	1,114.8
West South Central	328.5	47.7	201.5	529.5	1,111.3
Arkansas	314.0	42.5	207.8	531.7	992.3
Louisiana	373.8	52.9	227.8	605.0	1,268.1
Oklahoma	316.6	43.6	188.3	516.1	1,082.6
Texas	321.5	47.9	195.8	509.9	1,101.4
Mountain	258.1	34.0	142.9	441.1	879.0
Montana	259.0	37.2	129.1	428.7	931.1
Idaho	228.0	34.0	137.7	364.1	779.8
Wyoming	271.1	24.7	125.8	456.7	1,025.7
Colorado	251.1	29.4	126.3	422.9	907.4
New Mexico	260.8	32.1	155.2	435.7	885.4
Arizona	290.1	40.6	183.3	519.4	887.1
Utah	187.5	32.6	93.7	300.0	674.6
Nevada	316.6	39.2	166.6	578.6	1,044.8
Pacific	298.2	42.2	167.5	472.8	1,062.5
Washington	295.3	44.5	163.9	508.8	982.4
Oregon	289.8	38.7	155.9	453.2	1,066.7
California	302.1	41.8	170.5	472.5	1,088.4
Alaska	310.0	47.7	184.2	420.7	1,186.4
Hawaii	232.3	47.2	131.6	391.6	745.3

*Adjusted on basis of age distribution of the United States total population, 1940.

Source of basic data: Mortality figures from Division of Vital Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics—rates computed in Statistical Bureau of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Geographic Variations in Mortality from Cancer

Cancer, which ranks second among the leading causes of death in the United States, is responsible for about a fifth of all deaths in the nation. The mortality rates from cancer show wide variation by age and sex, as well as by geographic area.

Tables 1 and 2 present the mortality from cancer among men and women in the United States in 1978. Death rates from malignant neoplasms are shown by state and geographic division in 10-year age groupings between 35 and 74 and also for ages 35-74 combined. The combined death rates have been age-adjusted to allow for differences in the age composition of state populations.

In 1978 the mortality from cancer among men aged 35-74 was 322 deaths per 100,000 population for the nation as a whole. The highest mortality at these ages—351 deaths per 100,000—was registered in the East South Central States, followed by the South Atlantic States with 347 deaths per 100,000. The New England, East North Central, Middle Atlantic, and West South Central States recorded death rates among men that ranged between 324 and 329 deaths per 100,000. The lowest mortality rate from cancer at these ages was recorded in the Mountain States, with 258 deaths per 100,000 population, while the West North Central and Pacific States, each reported rates below 300 per 100,000.

The death rate from cancer among women aged 35-74 was about 30 percent lower than the rate for males in 1978. The geographic pattern of mortality among women at these ages was also quite different from that among men. The highest mortality rate—240 per 100,000 population—was recorded in the Middle Atlantic area, followed by the East North Central States with 232 per 100,000, and the Pacific States with 230. The lowest mortality rates from cancer were recorded in the Mountain States—197 per 100,000 population—and in the West North Central, West South Central, and East South Central States, each reporting slightly fewer than 215 deaths per 100,000 population. In the New England and South Atlantic areas, death rates were less than 230 per 100,000 population.

The highest cancer mortality rates among both men and women were recorded in the District of Columbia—473 deaths per 100,000 for men and 302 deaths for women. Utah reported the lowest mortality rates—188 per 100,000 for men and 165 for women. Among men aged 35-74, cancer mortality rates were higher than 350 deaths per 100,000 in Louisiana, Delaware, Maryland, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Mortality rates were below 350 per 100,000 in all other states, with about a third reporting fewer than 300 deaths per 100,000. Among women aged 35-74, cancer death rates were higher than 250 per 100,000 in Delaware, Nevada, Maryland, and New Hampshire; in all other states the rate was lower than 250 per 100,000, with 11 states reporting fewer than 200 deaths per 100,000.

Cancer death rates in 1978 were generally higher for women than for men at ages 35-44. At ages 45-54, the rates for women were higher in the Mountain and Pacific States, but lower in other areas. At ages 55-74, however, death rates were markedly higher for males than for females. For both men and women, mortality rates from

TABLE 2—MORTALITY FROM MALIGNANT NEOPLASMS AMONG WOMEN
United States—1978

Death Rate per 100,000

Area	Ages 35-74*	Ages 35-44	Ages 45-54	Ages 55-64	Ages 65-74
United States	225.7	53.8	176.9	369.3	600.7
New England	229.1	52.9	175.8	371.2	629.8
Maine	225.6	40.8	184.7	331.6	680.8
New Hampshire	255.7	57.7	220.7	399.1	672.1
Vermont	216.2	57.4	165.9	351.5	570.8
Massachusetts	226.4	53.3	175.1	365.4	618.5
Rhode Island	245.8	66.3	187.5	376.2	687.7
Connecticut	225.1	50.6	161.4	388.4	611.0
Middle Atlantic	240.0	54.4	186.9	392.0	650.6
New York	241.7	53.1	191.1	396.6	650.2
New Jersey	241.6	52.5	184.5	392.6	674.0
Pennsylvania	236.8	57.9	182.2	385.0	637.9
East North Central	232.1	56.4	182.3	375.2	620.8
Ohio	237.1	53.9	191.6	384.4	630.4
Indiana	232.4	61.3	182.0	376.6	608.2
Illinois	239.4	60.3	187.2	383.4	642.9
Michigan	226.8	58.2	175.0	373.2	594.8
Wisconsin	210.1	42.6	161.0	334.5	604.7
West North Central	208.3	50.6	160.5	336.2	565.8
Minnesota	202.1	47.1	148.6	323.6	576.1
Iowa	195.0	43.7	134.5	346.0	527.0
Missouri	225.7	59.1	185.3	361.1	578.7
North Dakota	199.0	60.6	164.4	237.2	618.0
South Dakota	205.3	45.7	164.0	296.0	614.5
Nebraska	214.1	48.7	162.4	333.5	568.9
Kansas	196.6	46.8	142.6	328.2	540.5
South Atlantic	228.1	58.1	183.7	382.7	568.5
Delaware	280.4	47.1	235.3	474.0	739.9
Maryland	255.8	57.4	196.1	410.7	714.3
District of Columbia	301.9	64.4	259.1	466.3	816.6
Virginia	222.2	60.7	166.1	371.1	575.8
West Virginia	227.2	52.5	196.1	361.8	581.9
North Carolina	204.5	53.8	164.3	343.7	504.9
South Carolina	206.0	49.2	149.6	341.3	569.8
Georgia	216.5	60.7	182.0	351.6	524.6
Florida	239.0	62.7	199.7	416.0	548.3
East South Central	212.0	60.2	165.7	339.3	550.1
Kentucky	230.9	63.7	192.3	365.7	575.2
Tennessee	203.1	49.6	159.9	331.1	537.2
Alabama	214.2	61.1	165.9	329.9	579.8
Mississippi	198.8	74.8	135.3	329.8	492.3
West South Central	209.6	53.9	169.9	331.3	551.8
Arkansas	200.1	64.0	162.2	311.7	498.6
Louisiana	228.9	55.2	188.3	341.2	641.1
Oklahoma	210.2	54.0	169.3	345.2	535.0
Texas	205.8	51.9	165.7	328.7	541.8
Mountain	197.3	41.0	150.4	323.7	551.3
Montana	194.9	23.4	152.5	315.5	591.4
Idaho	187.3	30.4	137.6	334.8	514.7
Wyoming	187.0	46.6	114.8	291.1	594.1
Colorado	189.4	45.9	133.6	307.6	541.9
New Mexico	196.8	31.1	139.0	338.9	578.4
Arizona	209.5	51.3	175.9	320.4	562.3
Utah	165.4	39.9	128.0	267.4	448.4
Nevada	259.9	35.5	218.1	479.2	642.8
Pacific	230.3	48.4	175.5	384.2	631.7
Washington	219.1	46.6	174.0	360.5	590.7
Oregon	214.8	41.8	160.2	382.2	567.3
California	235.5	49.6	178.5	391.4	650.5
Alaska	233.0	32.0	198.5	350.7	699.8
Hawaii	184.3	50.4	139.8	305.9	476.2

*Adjusted on basis of age distribution of the United States total population, 1940.

Source of basic data: Mortality figures from Division of Vital Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics—rates computed in Statistical Bureau of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

cancer of all sites combined increased sharply with age. Among males cancer death rates quadrupled between ages 35-44 and 45-54 and more than doubled with each 10-year advance at the older ages. Among women the increase with age was somewhat smaller—death rates tripled between ages 35-44 and 45-54, doubled between ages 45-54 and 55-64, and rose by about three fifths in the oldest age group.

Cancer mortality among females at ages 35-44 was highest in the East South Central States—60 deaths per 100,000. The highest rates were recorded in Mississippi (75 per 100,000) and Rhode Island (66 per 100,000), followed by the District of Columbia, Arkansas, and Kentucky (each with 64 deaths per 100,000). The lowest mortality among women—41 deaths per 100,000—occurred in the Mountain States. However, a death rate of 23 per 100,000 was recorded in Montana, while the states of Idaho, New Mexico, Alaska, Nevada, and Utah each reported fewer than 40 deaths per 100,000. Among males in the 35-44 age group, cancer death rates were somewhat lower. The highest mortality from cancer among males—55 deaths per 100,000—was found in the East South Central States, followed by the South Atlantic area with 50 deaths per 100,000. The highest rates at these ages were experienced in West Virginia (70 per 100,000), the District of Columbia (68 per 100,000), and Rhode Island (65 per 100,000). The lowest mortality in 1978 occurred in the Mountain and West North Central regions—both with rates below 40 per 100,000. The state of Wyoming reported a cancer death rate of 25 per 100,000, followed by Nebraska and Colorado, each with a rate of 29 per 100,000.

At ages 45-54, mortality from cancer was higher among males than among females in all geographic divisions except the Mountain and Pacific States. The highest mortality among men at these ages occurred in the East South Central, South Atlantic, and West South Central areas, with rates of more than 200 per 100,000. The District of Columbia reported the highest death rate—308 deaths per 100,000. Among the states, Mississippi had the highest rate—240 per 100,000. The lowest cancer death rate among men at these ages—94 per 100,000—was recorded in Utah. For women at ages 45-54 the highest mortality from cancer was reported in the Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, and East North Central divisions, with rates of about 185 deaths per 100,000 population. The highest death rate was recorded in the District of Columbia (259 per 100,000), followed by Delaware with 235 deaths per 100,000. Both New Hampshire and Nevada reported mortality of about 220 per 100,000 population. The Mountain division, with a rate of 150 per 100,000, had the lowest mortality from cancer. Among the states, the lowest death rate (115 per 100,000) was recorded in Wyoming.

In 1978 the national death rate from cancer among males aged 55-64 was about two fifths higher than the rate among females. The heaviest mortality among males at these ages was recorded in the East South Central and South Atlantic areas, both with rates over 580 per 100,000. The highest cancer death rate—819 per 100,000 population—was experienced in the District of Columbia, while the states of Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, and Delaware reported rates of more than 600 per 100,000. The lowest rates were noted in the Mountain, West North Central, and Pacific areas, with death rates below 475 per 100,000. The states with the lowest rates were Utah (300 per 100,000) and North Dakota (359 per 100,000). Among women at these ages the highest rates—over 380 per 100,000—occurred in the Middle Atlantic, Pacific, and South Atlantic States. In the states of Nevada and Delaware, rates of 479 and 474 per 100,000, respectively, were reached. The lowest rate—324 per 100,000—was recorded in the Mountain division. Among the states the lowest rates were registered in North Dakota (237 per 100,000) and Utah (267 per 100,000).

At ages 65-74 the death rate from cancer among men was more than four fifths higher nationally than that for women. The highest cancer mortality among males at these ages occurred in the New England area—1,158 per 100,000—closely followed by the rates in the Middle Atlantic and South Atlantic divisions. The District of Columbia reported the highest death rate—1,462 per 100,000. In Vermont and Maryland death rates in excess of 1,300 per 100,000 were recorded, while Delaware reported a rate of 1,293 per 100,000 and Louisiana 1,268 per 100,000. The lowest mortality was registered in the Mountain division—

879 per 100,000. The states with the lowest rates were Utah (675 per 100,000), Hawaii (745 per 100,000), and Idaho (780 per 100,000). Among women aged 65-74 cancer death rates were highest in the Middle Atlantic region— 651 per 100,000. However, death rates in excess of 700 per 100,000 were recorded in both Delaware and Maryland. The highest rate— 817 per 100,000— was recorded in the District of Columbia. The lowest death rates among women at these ages were found in the East South Central, Mountain, and West South Central areas, all with about 550 deaths per 100,000. In Utah, Hawaii, Mississippi, and Arkansas, however, rates below 500 per 100,000 were recorded.

The increase in cancer death rates among both men and women has been due in large part to rising mortality from cancer of the respiratory system, primarily cancer of the lung. In 1978 deaths from respiratory cancer were three times more frequent among men than among women; ten years earlier mortality among males had been five times that among females. In 1968 cancer of this site was responsible for 35 percent of all cancer deaths among men aged 35-74 and for 9 percent of all such deaths among women. In 1978 respiratory cancer accounted for 40 percent of all cancer deaths among men at ages 35-74 and for 17 percent of such deaths among women at these ages.

Continued Increase in Elderly Population

For the past few decades the number of senior citizens in the United States has been increasing faster than the total population and it is expected that the proportion of elders will continue to rise in the near future. In April 1980 there were more than 25,540,000 persons aged 65 and over in the nation. The population at these ages increased by about 5,570,000, or 27.9 percent, between the 1970 and 1980 decennial censuses; there was a rise of only 11.4 percent in the total resident population during this period. Currently, persons 65 years of age or older represent 11.3 percent of the total population, compared with 9.8 percent in 1970 and 9.2 percent in 1960.

The states in the Northeast and North Central regions of the country generally reported the smallest growth rates between 1970 and 1980, while the states in the South and West recorded increases greater than the national average. As shown in the accompanying table, the eight states comprising the Mountain division experienced the largest relative increase in the number of elderly persons—53.3 percent—followed by the South Atlantic States, with a 49.3 percent increase. On the other hand, the smallest relative increases—about 16 percent—occurred in the West North Central and Middle Atlantic divisions.

In four states the increase in the older population was more than two and a half times the average for the nation as a whole. The number of elderly increased by 113.7 percent in Nevada and by 90.8 percent in Arizona. Hawaii reported the third most rapid rise, 73.3 percent, and Florida ranked fourth with an increase of 71 percent.

Florida led all states with the largest numerical increase in population aged 65 and over. Almost 700,000 more senior citizens lived in Florida in April 1980 than in 1970; currently, more than

1,680,000 elderly persons reside within the state. The large population gain in Florida can be attributed to the continued influx of retirees to the Sunshine State.

The increase in California was almost as large —623,000—so that in 1980 the state had more than 2,410,000 senior citizens. Texas had the next largest numerical gain in elderly population, followed by Pennsylvania and New York. In 1980 New York, the second most populous state in the nation, had 2,160,000 residents aged 65 and over. The older population in New York now exceeds the total population in 17 other states and in the District of Columbia. Other states with more than one million elders were Pennsylvania, Texas, Illinois, and Ohio.

In California and Florida the majority of the senior citizens reside in the southernmost developed areas of each state. In southern California, the number of elders rose by nearly one third in the four large standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSAs) as a group. Specifically, in the Los Angeles-Long Beach area (the largest of the California SMSAs) the number of persons 65 years of age or older increased from 652,000 in 1970 to 743,000 in 1980, or by one seventh. In San Diego the number of elders rose by more than three fifths, reflecting an increase from 73,000 to 191,000. In the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario SMSA, the number of older persons increased by half, while the number of older residents in the Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove SMSA rose by two thirds. The increase of about 60,000 elders in each of these areas brought the population of senior citizens in Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario to 189,000 and that in Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove to 161,000.

In Florida almost half of the state's population aged 65 and over resided in just three SMSAs—336,000 in Tampa-St. Petersburg, 255,000 in Miami, and 224,000 in Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood. The proportion of senior citizens in the total population in these three southern Florida SMSAs was higher than the proportion in any of the nation's SMSAs with a total population of one million or more. In the Tampa-St. Petersburg and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood SMSAs, the elderly accounted for more than 20 percent of the total population of these areas, and for 16 percent of all residents in the Miami SMSA. In another popular retirement area—the Phoenix, Arizona, SMSA—senior citizens made up almost 12 percent of the population.

Among SMSAs with a total population of one million or more in 1980, Houston, Texas, had the smallest proportion of elderly—just 6 percent. An examination of the SMSAs with four million or more residents indicates that persons 65 and over accounted for 13 percent of the population in New York, 12 percent in Philadelphia, and 10 percent in Los Angeles-Long Beach, Chicago, and Detroit.

Between the 1970 and 1980 decennial censuses, the proportion of the population aged 65 and over increased in every state except Wyoming. Florida has by far the largest proportion of elders —17.3 percent—up from 14.5 percent in 1970 and 11.2 percent in 1960. Arkansas had the next highest proportion (13.7 percent), followed by Rhode Island (13.4 percent). Also registering a high proportion of older residents were five of the seven states in the West North Central division —Iowa, Missouri, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas—where the proportion of elders was 13.0 percent or more.

Although there has been a significant increase nationally in the older population during the past decade, the Mountain States as a group still continued to record the smallest proportion of aged persons—9.3 percent. In Wyoming the proportion of older persons declined from 9 percent of the total population in 1970 to 7.9 percent in 1980 as a consequence of the migration into the state during the 1970s of a large number of young people who helped to develop the state's energy resources. To some extent, such an influx of younger people into neighboring Colorado and Utah accounted for the small increase in the proportion of elders in these states. Although the proportion of elders in Alaska increased slightly during the past 10 years, the number of senior citizens in the state is quite small.

During the past decade, the number of elderly women has continued to increase faster than the number of elderly men. This is a reflection of the more favorable survival rates among women throughout the life cycle. Of the 25.5 million persons in the United States who were 65 years of

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age or older in 1980, 10.3 million were men, and 15.2 million were women. There were almost five million more elderly women than men in 1980, compared with a three and a quarter million difference in 1970. The ratio of elderly men per 100 women (sex ratio) was 67.7 in 1980, 72.2 in 1970, and 82.8 in 1960.

In the nine geographic divisions of the United States in 1980, the sex ratio was highest in the Mountain area and lowest in New England. Among the states, only Hawaii had more elderly men than women, while the number of senior citizens of each sex in Alaska was almost the same. In Nevada, Idaho, and Arizona the sex ratio was considerably above the national average of 67.7 men per 100 women, while the ratio of elderly men to women was below 60 in the District of Columbia and in Massachusetts.

Accident Mortality at the Older Ages

About 23 percent of all accidental deaths in the United States occur among persons aged 65 or older, although only 11 percent of the population is in this age group. Accidents are responsible for about 24,000 deaths each year among the elderly and constitute one of the leading causes of death among them, outranked only by the major cardiovascular diseases, malignant neoplasms, and pneumonia. Mortality from accidents at ages 65 and over is considerably higher among men than among women and is also higher among nonwhite men than among white men. However, the mortality from accidents is lower among nonwhite women at these ages than among white women.

As shown in Table 1 on page 11, the death rate from accidents among men 65 years of age or older decreased from 177.7 per 100,000 population in 1968-69 to 130.4 in 1977-78, or by 27 percent. The decrease was of about the same order for both white and nonwhite men. During the same period, the death rate from accidents among women at these ages decreased by about 34 percent, falling from 122.7 to 81.5 per 100,000. The degree of improvement was about the same for both white and nonwhite women.

The sex differential in mortality from accidents among older persons widened considerably between 1968-69 and 1977-78. In 1968-69 the death rate from accidents among men was about 45 percent greater than the death rate among women. A decade later, the death rate among men was 60 percent higher than the corresponding rate among women. The ratio of white to nonwhite accident mortality among older men was the same in both periods, with the death rate for nonwhite men exceeding that for white men by about 17 percent. Nonwhite women at these ages continued to experience lower mortality from accidents than did white women; the difference widened slightly, however, from 12 percent in 1968-69 to 15 percent in 1977-78.

Table 2 presents detailed data on the mortality experience among elderly people by age, sex, and type of accident. In 1977-78 the death rate from accidents among older people rose sharply with advancing age. The death rate of 214.3 per 100,000 among men aged 75 or older was about 2.5 times the rate of 87.7 recorded among those aged 65-74. Among women the death rate at ages 75 and over (140.5 per 100,000) was 3.5 times that at ages 65-74 (40.9). The sex differential in mortality from accidents also changed with age. At ages 65-74 the death rate among men was more than twice the rate among women; at 75 and

TABLE 1—MORTALITY FROM ACCIDENTS AT AGES 65 AND OVER

United States, 1968-69 and 1977-78

Sex and Race	Death Rate per 100,000 1968-69	1977-78	Percent Change
Total	146.2	101.4	−31
White	145.8	101.1	−31
All other	151.1	104.4	−31
Men	177.7	130.4	−27
White	175.4	128.3	−27
All other	203.4	149.8	−26
Women	122.7	81.5	−34
White	123.8	82.6	−33
All other	108.6	70.4	−35

Source of basic data: Reports of the Division of Vital Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics.

over the rate for men was 50 percent greater than that for women.

Seventy percent of all deaths from falls in 1977-78 occurred among the elderly. As shown in Table 2, falls were by far the leading cause of accidental death at ages 65 and over, accounting for one fifth of all accidental deaths among men at ages 65-74 and for more than two fifths of the total at ages 75 and over. The proportions were even larger for women—nearly one fourth at ages 65-74 and three fifths at the later ages. Among men, the death rate from falls at ages 75 and over was five times the rate at ages 65-74; among women the rate was nine times greater at the later ages. This sharp rise with age may be attributed to the physiological changes associated with aging, which produce a greater susceptibility to falls among older people. The elderly are also more likely to sustain more serious injuries and to encounter a greater number of medical complications.

Motor vehicle accidents ranked second among the leading causes of accidental death among persons aged 65 and over. At ages 65-74, however, such accidents outranked every other type and were responsible for about one third of the total accident mortality among both men and women at these ages. Unlike the mortality from falls, which rose rapidly with advancing age, the death rate from motor vehicle accidents recorded only a moderate increase with age. Pedestrians were the victims in about a quarter of the motor vehicle accidents at ages 65-74; at ages 75 and over, pedestrians accounted for about a third of the fatalities.

Fires and flames were the third leading cause of accidental death among the elderly. The death rates from such accidents were appreciably higher among men than among women and increased with age. Among men the mortality in 1977-78 rose from 7.5 per 100,000 at ages 65-74 to 14.8 at ages 75 and over. Among women the death rate from fires (8.3 per 100,000) at ages 75 and over was more than double the rate at ages 65-74 (4.0 per 100,000). The infirmities of age and decreased agility make older people particularly vulnerable to fire hazards.

The inhalation and ingestion of food or other

TABLE 2—MORTALITY FROM LEADING TYPES OF ACCIDENTS AT AGES 65 AND OVER

United States, 1977-78

Type of Accident	Average Annual Death Rate per 100,000		
	Ages 65 and Over	Ages 65-74	Ages 75 and Over
Men			
Accidents—All Types	130.4	87.7	214.3
Falls	42.6	17.5	91.8
Motor vehicle	36.9	30.3	49.8
Pedestrian	11.5	8.1	18.1
Fires and flames	10.0	7.5	14.8
Inhalation and ingestion of food or other object	6.2	4.1	10.4
Drowning*	2.9	2.7	3.4
Poisoning by solids and liquids	1.8	1.5	2.5
Drugs and medicaments	1.2	.8	1.9
Women			
Accidents—All Types	81.5	40.9	140.5
Falls	39.7	9.6	83.3
Motor vehicle	16.0	14.3	18.5
Pedestrian	4.8	3.6	6.4
Fires and flames	5.8	4.0	8.3
Inhalation and ingestion of food or other object	4.1	2.4	6.6
Poisoning by solids and liquids	1.6	1.4	1.8
Drugs and medicaments	1.3	1.1	1.6
Drowning*	1.0	.7	1.4

*Exclusive of deaths in water transportation.
Source of basic data: Reports of the Division of Vital Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics.

objects causing obstruction, drowning, and poisoning by solids and liquids were also responsible for a significant number of deaths among the aged. The mortality from such accidents was generally higher among men than among women.

Data compiled by the U.S. National Health Survey also illustrate the magnitude and severity of the accident problem among the elderly. Such data indicated that in 1980 about 4,020,000 persons aged 65 and over suffered injuries that required medical attention or at least one day of restricted activity. About one out of every six persons aged 65 or older sustained a fairly serious injury during the year, often with considerable physical and psychological trauma. Many accidents among the elderly could be prevented and the devastating effects of others could be reduced if safety measures that take into account the special problems associated with aging were instituted.

Regional Variations in Office Visits to Physicians

Westerners visit physicians more frequently than do persons in other geographic regions of the nation. The fewest visits are made by those living in the North Central region and the South. Furthermore, inhabitants of metropolitan areas are more likely to visit a doctor's office than are residents of nonmetropolitan areas. These findings are based on data collected by the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey, 1977-78.

As may be seen from the table on page 14, all persons as a group in the conterminous United States averaged 2,644 office visits annually per 1,000 population in 1977-78. The highest rate—3,064 visits per 1,000—was recorded in the West; this was about 25 percent higher than the rates reported in the North Central region (2,489 per 1,000) and in the South (2,515 per 1,000). Residents of the Northeast averaged 2,699 visits per 1,000.

In the four geographic regions of the United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii), more than half of all office visits to physicians were made because of a physical complaint or symptom. The proportion of such office visits was much the same in each region, ranging from 56 percent in the North Central area to about 60 percent in the other three regions. The initial visit is usually prompted by one or more symptoms to which the physician attaches a tentative diagnosis, based on medical history, physical examination, and/or laboratory tests. In the aggregate, each person in the nation made an average of about 1.5 office visits annually to a physician because of these reasons; the average varied from 1.8 such visits in the West to 1.4 visits in the North Central region.

In every region, respiratory symptoms—mainly throat problems and cough—led in frequency as reasons for consulting physicians, followed by symptoms related to the musculoskeletal system, and general symptoms. (General symptoms include those to which no body part or system can be assigned, e.g., bleeding or fatigue, or symptoms that manifest themselves in more than one body system.) In the aggregate, slightly more than half of all visits to physicians—where symptoms prompted the call—were made because of problems relating to one of the aforementioned categories. Office visits for respiratory symptoms were most frequent in the West—328 per 1,000—and least frequent in the South—283 per 1,000.

Diagnostic, screening and preventive procedures, the second most common reason for contacting physicians, accounted for an average of 499 visits per 1,000 population per year nationwide. The frequency rate was highest in the West (545 per 1,000) and lowest in the South (454 per 1,000). In the Northeast, the leading subclassification of such visits was general examinations, mainly general medical examinations (210 per 1,000). Special examinations, largely routine prenatal examinations, were most frequent in the other regions of the country.

Diseases in the aggregate accounted for about 236 office visits annually per 1,000 population, or about one eleventh of all such visits. The highest rate was recorded in the West, 280 per 1,000, which was more than a third higher than the 207 visits per 1,000 registered in the North Central region. Nearly a fourth of all visits—where dis-

OFFICE VISITS TO PHYSICIANS
United States, 1977-78

Principal Reason for Visit	Location of Physician's Practice						
	All Locations	Geographic Region				Area	
		Northeast	North Central	South	West	Metropolitan	Non-metropolitan
	Average Annual Rate of Office Visits per 1,000 Population						
All Visits*	2,643.7	2,698.9	2,488.9	2,515.4	3,063.6	2,894.1	2,105.4
All Symptoms	1,530.2	1,582.1	1,400.7	1,464.4	1,795.3	1,680.4	1,208.4
General symptoms	222.2	223.3	196.2	226.3	254.9	240.4	183.3
Symptoms referable to psychological and mental disorders	72.9	105.3	49.6	62.1	87.2	93.9	27.4
Symptoms referable to nervous system	87.9	93.9	80.1	85.3	97.4	95.9	70.8
Symptoms referable to eyes and ears	156.1	168.0	135.1	140.6	203.0	169.6	127.3
Symptoms referable to respiratory system	297.5	311.7	284.2	283.3	328.0	313.2	264.1
Symptoms referable to digestive system	130.1	128.6	122.5	129.5	145.6	136.7	116.1
Symptoms referable to genitourinary system	139.1	130.1	126.8	133.8	180.6	154.9	105.1
Symptoms referable to skin, nails, and hair	151.1	150.3	143.8	140.8	183.4	169.9	110.7
Symptoms referable to musculoskeletal system	256.8	254.3	244.3	246.4	300.5	287.7	190.5
All Diseases†	236.4	253.1	206.7	226.5	280.2	265.1	175.0
Diseases of circulatory system	57.8	74.7	48.4	52.3	60.8	63.4	45.8
All Diagnostic, Screening, and Preventive Procedures	499.1	531.0	498.9	454.2	545.2	544.6	402.0
General examinations	172.0	210.0	171.5	156.9	152.8	190.8	131.8
Special examinations	186.6	182.4	178.6	184.6	209.6	204.1	149.3
Diagnostic tests	97.9	99.9	114.4	78.0	107.5	100.8	91.7
All Treatments	204.6	199.5	188.6	199.3	242.8	231.8	143.8
Medications	51.6	62.3	51.5	48.7	43.4	55.0	44.4
Preoperative and postoperative care	75.8	62.6	64.9	78.4	101.1	88.5	46.1
Other Reasons	173.4	133.2	194.0	171.0	200.1	172.2	176.2
Injuries and adverse effects	113.8	80.8	124.4	118.6	132.7	112.6	116.7

*Including visits where the reason cannot be determined.
†Excludes congenital anomalies and perinatal conditions.
Source of basic data: National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey, National Center for Health Statistics.

ease was given as the reason for the visit—were connected with diseases of the circulatory system. About two thirds of such visits were for hypertension.

Treatment (such as medication, preoperative or postoperative care, therapy, or counseling) was infrequently cited as the reason for visiting a physician. The annual rate of such visits in the West was 243 per 1,000, compared with fewer than 200 visits per 1,000 in the other regions of the nation. Much of the reason for the higher rate in the West can be attributed to the greater amount of preoperative and postoperative care in that part of the United States.

Visits prompted by injuries and adverse effects were among other reasons for consulting a physician, as were visits to obtain the results of tests, or for examinations needed for employment, school, or marriage. Of these, the most frequently cited reason for the visit was injuries and adverse effects. Nationwide, 114 persons per 1,000 visited physicians annually for these problems, the rates ranging from 81 visits per 1,000 in the Northeast to 133 per 1,000 in the West.

Residents of metropolitan areas visited physicians more often than did residents of nonmetropolitan areas. Those living in metropolitan areas averaged 2,894 visits per 1,000 in 1977-78, about 40 percent more than the 2,105 rate per 1,000 recorded by those in nonmetropolitan areas. Similarly, in every classification shown in the table except injuries and adverse effects, a greater number of visits were recorded among residents of metropolitan areas than among those in nonmetropolitan areas.

The high rates of office visits in the West and in metropolitan areas may be accounted for in part by the greater number of physicians in these locations. When visits are measured by the number of physicians practicing in the region, the opposite picture emerges—see chart on back page. The West, which had the highest rate per 1,000 population, had the lowest average number of office visits per physician—about 2,320—compared with about 2,380 per 1,000 in the Northeast, 2,740 in the North Central region, and 2,690 in the South. On the same basis, the rate in metropolitan areas was about 2,250 visits per 1,000 versus 3,910 visits in nonmetropolitan areas.

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RESIDENT POPULATION AT AGES 65 AND OVER
United States, 1960 to 1980*

Area	Number 1980	Increase 1970-80 Number	Increase 1970-80 Percent	Ratio Males per 100 Females 1970	Ratio Males per 100 Females 1980	Percent of All Ages 1960	Percent of All Ages 1970	Percent of All Ages 1980
United States	25,544,133	5,571,803	27.9	72.2	67.7	9.2	9.8	11.3
New England	1,520,368	256,084	20.3	65.5	62.1	10.7	10.7	12.3
Maine	140,918	26,784	23.5	71.1	66.3	11.0	11.5	12.5
New Hampshire	102,967	24,883	31.9	69.1	64.8	11.2	10.6	11.2
Vermont	58,166	10,840	22.9	69.1	66.2	11.2	10.6	11.4
Massachusetts	726,531	93,147	14.7	62.7	59.4	11.1	11.1	12.7
Rhode Island	126,922	23,086	22.2	65.8	60.7	10.4	10.9	13.4
Connecticut	364,864	77,344	26.9	67.9	65.0	9.6	9.5	11.7
Middle Atlantic	4,551,347	640,005	16.4	70.0	64.7	9.9	10.5	12.4
New York	2,160,558	209,227	10.7	69.8	63.7	10.1	10.7	12.3
New Jersey	859,682	166,179	24.0	69.3	65.3	9.2	9.7	11.7
Pennsylvania	1,531,107	264,599	20.9	70.7	65.9	10.0	10.7	12.9
East North Central	4,492,571	699,334	18.4	72.7	66.9	9.3	9.4	10.8
Ohio	1,169,437	176,318	17.8	70.9	65.4	9.2	9.3	10.8
Indiana	585,425	93,766	19.1	70.7	66.0	9.6	9.5	10.7
Illinois	1,261,160	172,416	15.8	70.3	65.3	9.7	9.8	11.0
Michigan	912,321	163,240	21.8	77.0	69.1	8.2	8.4	9.9
Wisconsin	564,228	93,594	19.9	77.7	71.1	10.2	10.7	12.0
West North Central	2,198,749	289,319	15.2	73.9	67.9	11.2	11.7	12.8
Minnesota	479,746	72,290	17.7	77.1	69.6	10.4	10.7	11.8
Iowa	387,498	38,285	11.0	72.1	66.6	11.9	12.4	13.3
Missouri	648,289	89,915	16.1	71.1	65.8	11.7	11.9	13.2
North Dakota	80,447	14,288	21.6	88.0	79.0	9.3	10.7	12.3
South Dakota	91,014	10,740	13.4	83.1	73.2	10.5	12.0	13.2
Nebraska	205,576	22,951	12.6	74.3	68.2	11.6	12.3	13.1
Kansas	306,179	40,850	15.4	71.6	66.7	11.0	11.8	13.0
South Atlantic	4,363,492	1,441,126	49.3	72.9	68.7	8.1	9.5	11.8
Delaware	59,284	15,635	35.8	68.5	65.0	8.0	8.0	10.0
Maryland	395,594	97,382	32.7	67.9	64.7	7.3	7.6	9.4
District of Columbia	74,202	3,884	5.5	59.5	58.0	9.1	9.3	11.6
Virginia	505,204	141,048	38.7	68.8	65.1	7.3	7.8	9.4
West Virginia	237,868	44,151	22.8	79.2	70.0	9.3	11.1	12.2
North Carolina	602,273	190,393	46.2	69.6	64.8	6.9	8.1	10.3
South Carolina	287,287	97,445	51.3	65.7	63.5	6.3	7.3	9.2
Georgia	516,808	151,482	41.5	64.5	62.3	7.4	8.0	9.5
Florida	1,684,972	699,706	71.0	82.7	76.0	11.2	14.5	17.3
East South Central	1,656,672	393,336	31.1	73.5	67.7	8.7	9.9	11.3
Kentucky	409,853	73,934	22.0	75.7	69.4	9.6	10.4	11.2
Tennessee	517,524	135,503	35.5	72.2	66.9	8.7	9.7	11.3
Alabama	439,938	115,675	35.7	71.1	66.4	8.0	9.4	11.3
Mississippi	289,357	68,224	30.9	76.1	68.8	8.7	10.0	11.5
West South Central	2,463,352	635,464	34.8	73.6	68.8	8.4	9.5	10.4
Arkansas	312,331	75,631	32.0	80.6	73.6	10.9	12.3	13.7
Louisiana	403,939	98,930	32.4	71.3	66.6	7.4	8.4	9.6
Oklahoma	376,042	77,368	25.9	73.1	67.6	10.7	11.7	12.4
Texas	1,371,040	383,535	38.8	72.9	68.7	7.8	8.8	9.6
Mountain	1,060,366	368,467	53.3	81.9	76.5	7.7	8.4	9.3
Montana	84,559	16,080	23.5	86.1	77.4	9.7	9.9	10.7
Idaho	93,680	26,263	39.0	86.5	82.2	8.7	9.5	9.9
Wyoming	37,218	7,142	23.7	87.2	76.4	7.8	9.0	7.9
Colorado	247,261	60,247	32.2	73.3	68.7	9.0	8.5	8.6
New Mexico	115,690	45,485	64.8	84.7	76.7	5.4	6.9	8.9
Arizona	306,971	146,090	90.8	85.8	80.3	6.9	9.1	11.3
Utah	109,220	32,173	41.8	78.0	74.0	6.7	7.3	7.5
Nevada	65,767	34,987	113.7	97.7	85.3	6.4	6.3	8.2
Pacific	3,237,216	848,668	35.5	72.5	70.4	8.8	9.0	10.2
Washington	431,417	111,023	34.7	76.0	71.6	9.8	9.4	10.4
Oregon	303,284	77,528	34.3	79.2	74.3	10.4	10.8	11.5
California	2,414,755	623,140	34.8	70.4	68.8	8.8	9.0	10.2
Alaska	11,530	4,730	69.6	127.2	99.5	2.4	2.3	2.9
Hawaii	76,230	32,247	73.3	101.3	101.3	4.6	5.7	7.9

*As of April 1 of each year.

Source of basic data: Decennial censuses of 1960, 1970, and 1980.

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